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CENTRE READY TO BRING FUEL UNDER GST, SAYS PURI

The Centre is ready to bring petrol and diesel under the GST regime but it is unlikely that the states will agree to such a move, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday in Srinagar. "For bringing petrol and diesel under GST, the states have to agree. If the states make the move, we are ready. The question of how to implement it should be addressed to the finance minister," Puri said | P13

Religious conversion by force dangerous, says SC

Warns it could affect national security, seeks affidavit from Centre

SHRUTI KAKKAR @New Delhi

TERMING the issue of fraudulent and forced religious conversions serious and dangerous, the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to file an affidavit by November 22 specifying further steps it could take to prevent it.

A bench of justices M R Shah and Hima Kohli said, "Everyone has right to freedom of religion but not by forced conversion. It's a very dangerous thing." It added that the issue might affect the security of the nation as well as the freedom of religion and conscience of the citizens.

"The issue with respect to alleged conversion of religion, if it is found to be correct and true, is a very serious issue which may ultimately affect the security of the nation as well as the freedom of religion and conscience of the citizens. Therefore, it is better that Union government may make their stand clear and file counter on what further steps can be taken by Union and/or others to curb such forced conversions," the court said.

Responding to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's contention that religious conversion is rampant in tribal areas, the bench said, "You have to step in now."

The court's remarks came on a plea filed by BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay, who sought a declaration that religious conversion by fraud, intimidation, threat and deceit as violative of fundamental rights. "There is not even one district which is free of religious conversion by hook and crook and the carrot and the stick," the plea stated. It was also argued that the situation is alarming as many individuals and organisations are carrying out mass conversions of SC-STs in rural areas.

"The mass conversion of socially, economically underprivileged people, particularly belonging to SC-ST, has been on a steep rise for the last 2 decades. These organisations operate very smoothly targeting socially, economically underprivileged sections particularly belonging to the SC-ST community," the plea alleged.

PETITION FILED IN THE WAKE OF LAVANYA SUICIDE

The plea, filed in the wake of the suicide of 17-year-old Lavanya in TN early this year, sought stringent steps to control conversion. Alternatively, he sought directions to the Law Commission to prepare a report as well as a bill to control "Deceit Religious Conversion"

Sebi nod clears decks for Adani's NDTV grab

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has paved the way for billionaire Gautam Adani taking control of New Delhi Television Ltd (NDTV) by giving the regulatory nod to the Adani Group to float an open offer for acquiring another 26% stake in the media company. Sebi's nod brings an end to the legal tussle between Prannoy and Rahika Roy-promoted NDTV and Adani Group over the control of the broadcaster.

Gautam Adani wanted to float an open offer in October itself, but it was delayed for want of the regulator's approval. It has now been rescheduled from November 22 to December 5, during which period NDTV shareholders can tender their shares to Adani Group at a predetermined price.

The Adani Group is offering ₹294 for each share of NDTV in the open offer. On Monday, NDTV shares closed at ₹365.

Adanis already hold a 29.18% stake in the New Delhi-based firm after they acquired Vishvapradhan Commercial Private Limited (VCPL)—which owned warrants of NDTV's promoter

entity RRPR Holding—and exercised the option to convert them into equity. If the open offer goes through, Adanis will have over 55% stake in NDTV.

Radhika and Prannoy Roy together hold 32% in NDTV.

It all started when Adani Group firm AMG Media Networks Limited bought VCPL for ₹114 crore in August this year. VCPL then decided to exercise its rights to convert those warrants into shares amounting to 99.5% of RRPR.

RRPR held 29.18% in NDTV.

NDTV promoters tried to avert the hostile takeover saying the market regulator had barred NDTV's founder-promoters from dealing in their shares for two years. NDTV promoters fired another salvo on September 1, 2022 saying VCPL needed the tax department's nod for exercising its right to convert its warrants.

Man chops

LIVE-IN PARTNER'S BODY INTO 35 PIECES IN DELHI

A 28-year-old man allegedly strangled his live-in partner and sawed her body into 35 pieces which he kept in a 300-litre fridge for almost three weeks at his residence in South Delhi's Mehrauli before scattering them across the city over days, police said on Monday | P9

KMF does a flip-flop on milk, curd price hike

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a flip-flop, the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) issued an order on Monday morning hiking prices of milk and curd by ₹3 per litre, but put the order on hold by evening after Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai intervened.

The KMF order was signed by its chairman Balachandra Jarkiholi, stating that prices will be hiked with effect from November 15. However, the CM said that a meeting will be convened on November 20 to take a decision on the price revision.

The KMF chairman said, "The order was issued based on a decision taken in the board meeting following discussions with milk unions. The farmers have been demanding a hike of ₹5 per litre for the last 10 months. The ₹3 per litre hike is the middle path we had taken. In the evening, the CM spoke to me over the phone and told me that the order should be put on hold till November 20."

KMF officials said that soon after the order, the process of printing the revised rates on milk and curd packets had begun, which has to be stopped now. The farmers will also have to be convinced of the decision. Sources in the government told *TNIE* that the KMF was going the Kerala way, which went ahead with the hike without the chief minister's approval. P5

FIRST TIME

ADGP-rank officer to handle Bengaluru traffic

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a move to give more emphasis on managing traffic in Bengaluru city in a better way, the state government has upgraded the post of Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) to Special Commissioner (Traffic) and has posted an officer of the rank of ADGP. ADGP M Abdul a Saleem, who was ADGP (Administration), is transferred and posted as the Special Commissioner (Traffic).

For the first time, Bengaluru Traffic Police will get an ADGP rank officer as its head and now the city will have two officers of the same rank. City Police Commissioner Pratap Reddy is also an ADGP rank officer. P3

EXPRESS INTAKE

Scolded for cheating, teen student ends life | P3

Nothing wrong in painting classrooms saffron: CM | P4

Mismatch: 11K bridegrooms for 250 brides | P4

PM Modi's G20 focus to be growth revival | P9

EXPRESS READ

Retail, wholesale inflation decline in Oct

New Delhi: Two days after RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said inflation was cooling, government data released on Monday showed that both retail and wholesale inflation indeed moderated in October. The finance ministry said the "drastic decline" in October retail inflation is mainly due to a dip in food price inflation | P13

Tihar supdt bent rules for AAP neta, suspended

New Delhi: Delhi chief secretary Naresh Kumar on Monday suspended Tihar jail superintendent Ajit Kumar for allegedly providing special treatment to jailed AAP minister Satyendar Jain. Recently, the ED had told a court that the former abused his power inside jail and got special treatment | P10